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**HOUSE APPROVES FUNDS TO HELP  
MEET GREAT LAKES NAVIGATION NEEDS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. –“ Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) announced today that the U.S. House of Representatives has approved increased funding in the FY2008 energy and water appropriations bill to help maintain commercial navigation on the Great Lakes.

“The Great Lakes maritime industry contributes greatly to our economy and is a vital source of good-paying jobs for the region,” said Obey, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

“Yet the Great Lakes have experienced decades of inadequate federal investment, which has reduced

the efficiency and productivity of that industry and left us facing the growing likelihood of a disruption to our region's economy.â€

â€œWe can't reverse the chronic under-funding of the Great Lakes in one year, but we can make a start,â€ Obey added, noting that the energy and water appropriations bill includes three initiatives to help navigation on the Great Lakes.

1. \$126.9 million â€“ \$21 million more than the President requested

“ for Army Corps of Engineers’ Operations and Maintenance work on the Great Lakes to help address a backlog of more than \$200 million in dredging needs that has left three out of four vessels on the Great Lake carrying “light loads” .

2. \$2 million to help the Army Corps of Engineers design a second large lock at Sault St. Marie, because the existing lock is 50 years old and a failure would shut down much the shipping on the Upper Lakes. 12,000 ships representing over 200 million tons of cargo with a value of over \$8 billion use the lock every year.

3. \$800,000 to complete the U.S. “ Canadian Great Lakes Navigation System Study to identify the environmental and navigational needs of the entire system.

However, “the bill must still be approved by the Senate and signed by the President before it becomes law, but having these funds included in today’s House approved version means that a major hurdle has been cleared,” Obey noted.

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